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ABSTRACT

Techniques for modifying behavior with the aim of losing and controlling weight are discussed. A worksheet identifying weight control behaviors is included. (JD)

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MANAGEMENT OF ONE'S OWN BEHAVIOR FOR CONTROLLING WEIGHT

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Presentation for Weight Control Program
Seventh Day Adventist Clinic, Tumon Heights
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May 2, 1979

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Charleen Dolphin Peryon is an Assistant Professor of Special and Elementary Education at the University of Guam, Agana, Guam in the Marianas Islands. She has held the positions of Elementary Education Consultant for the Department of Education, Guam, Reading Specialist, Classroom teacher at elementary and secondary levels. She has served as a consultant for various Departments of Education in the Trust Territory of the Pacific, United States Department of Defense in Manila, Philippines, and Hawaii Department of Education, and various publishing companies in the United States and the Pacific Area. She is past president of the Guam International Reading Association, state chairman for Guam and the Pacific Region for IRA. She is a member of various professional associations. She completed her work for the Ph.D. degree in August 1978 at Utah State University at Logan in the area of Special Education and Early Childhood.

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MANAGEMENT OF ONE'S OWN BEHAVIOR FOR CONTROLLING WEIGHT

Charleen D. Peryon

Seminar Objectives

1. State the definoitions of a) Involuntary behavior and b) Intelligent behavior.
2. What are the controlling factors in each of the above behaviors.
3. Pinpoint a behavior you want to change, one that fits the criteria for a specific behavior. (Must involve movement, be repeatable, and under the direct control of you).
4. Identify the preceding events (signals) that set your behavior in motion.
5. Identify the consequences of the behavior.
6. Complete the model for analyzing your own behavior.
7. Design your own contract for maintaining your own weight control program, according to the steps listed on worksheet number two.

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Usually when we think about managing behavior, we are generally referring to managing someone else's behavior, such as our children, our students, our fellow workers, or employees or perhaps we may be thinking of changing behavior of our husband or wife or even a parent.

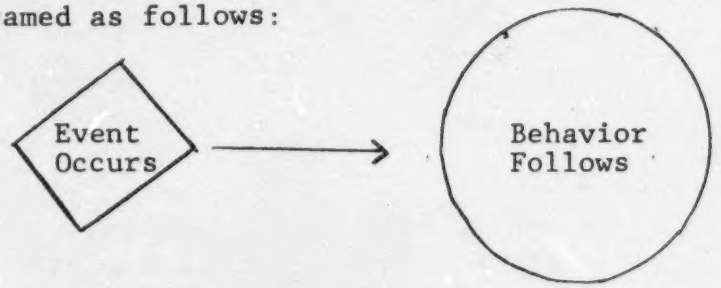
However, here for the next few weeks and most likely for the rest of our lives we will be concentrating on managing our own behavior in this one important aspect of weight control.

Before one begins changing behavior it is necessary to do three (3) things: 1) clarify the kind of behavior we are talking about, 2) pinpoint the specific behaviors, and 3) identify what is controlling the behavior now. After we examine these factors then we can begin to be effective in changing the behavior we wish to change.

First, most human behavior can be classified into two categories: Involuntary behavior and Intelligent behavior.

Involuntary Behavior (usually referred to as respondent behavior) involves reflexive actions and activities of certain

glands and muscles that are not under the direct control of a person. These behaviors are said to be caused by the environmental event that immediately precede it. This behavior model can be diagramed as follows:

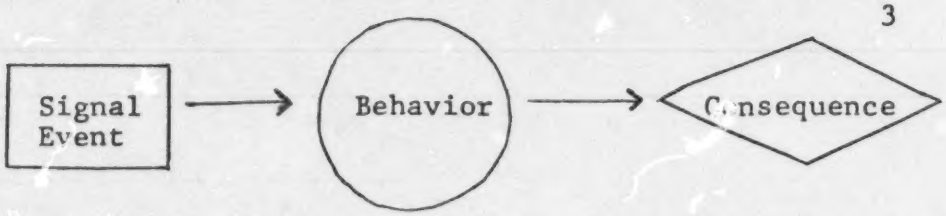


The event occurs and this causes the behavior. Some examples of this type of behavior are:

Event	Behavior
Putting food in mouth	Saliva flows
See a bright light	Blink eyes
Hear a sudden loud noise	Startle reaction
Swallow food	Stomach juices are secreted

Although one can sometimes control whether or not the event occurs, such as slamming a door or eating, once it does occur the behavior itself will inevitably follow. If the event does not occur the behavior will not be produced.

Intelligent Behavior, on the other hand is voluntary behavior. It can be defined as a movement of voluntary muscles that can be repeated and is under control of the person. This kind of behavior is controlled by the events that immediately follow the behavior. We can diagram this type of behavior as a three-part pattern:



Let's look at some examples:

Signal	Behavior	Consequence
See a red light	Stop car	Proceed on trip
See a red light	Continue driving	Get a ticket
See refrigerator	Open, see food, eat	Enjoyment
Meet a co-worker	Tell a dirty joke	Co-worker doesn't laugh
Parent talks to visitors	Tina interrupts	Parent talks to child

As you can see, a preceding event is neutral. It is not a cause of the behavior, as is the case with involuntary behavior. But it will serve to signal the person to act in a certain way. The person then decides to perform a specific behavior. After the behavior, an event (consequence) will follow. How well this event is received will determine whether or not the person will repeat the behavior. If the consequence is unpleasant the person may decide not to repeat the behavior. However, even though unpleasant consequences result, the behavior may be repeated anyway, because it serves as an attention getter. Often the only attention some persons receive is for doing things that cause unpleasant consequences. So the behaviors are repeated to get attention. As social beings, we all need and

want attention from others. If it is pleasant, it is very likely the behavior will be repeated.

In observing intelligent behavior, it is not too difficult to see that most behaviors occur for one of two reasons:

(1) to gain pleasant consequences or

(2) to avoid unpleasant consequences

It is the consequences that maintain or control a behavior. We sometimes refer to this as the reinforcing event.

Relating this distinction between Involuntary Behavior and Intelligent Behavior to weight control, one can begin to see that we do have within us the knowledge to control behaviors that are done voluntarily, if we examine these behaviors in terms of the model. Use worksheet #1 to analyze one or more of your own behaviors. First, identify the behavior to be controlled (e.g. eating between meals). Then identify what event or situation acts as a signal to start the behavior. Perhaps a coffee break at work or seeing a snack vending machine. Then finally, observe or identify what happens immediately after the behavior has occurred. This is your consequence event.

After analyzing a behavior in terms of these three factors, one is ready to plan a program to change the behaviors one desires to change.

Once a behavior is analyzed, one can see the specific consequences that are maintaining or controlling the behavior. The events that signal or "set-off" the behavior will also be clear.

In order to change a specific behavior then, one needs to adjust the preceding (Signal) events and/or consequences.

Before these factors are adjusted though, one must decide if the behavior is one that should be weakened or strengthened. Let us look first at what can be done to weaken a behavior. By weaken, we mean reducing the intensity or occurence of a behavior or eliminating it all together. For example, perhaps one eats too much at meal times. Weakening that behavior would mean reducing the amount that is eaten. Another example - eating between meals - is probably one behavior that a person may want to eliminate all together or extinguish it, one might say.

Some ways of weakening undesirable behaviors are:

Extinction - this means cutting off the consequences that are reinforcing it. Don't buy tempting "wrong type" foods or avoid occasions where you will eat wrong food.

Change the Signal Events - change or remove the condition that sets off the behavior. Avoid being near food during a coffee break at work. Do not go directly to the kitchen on returning home.

Cost/Punishment - set conditions so that the behavior cannot occur without being laborious, painful or costly. Paste a picture of a fat person on the refrigerator door (painful). Keep records of food eaten to see calories

add up beyond limit (costly). Take away some points that you may have earned on a reward system (costly). Keep forbidden foods in a hard to reach place (laborious).

Let us look now at ways one can strengthen behaviors. There are a number of techniques for strengthening behaviors. Two that are very helpful in weight control are:

(1) Shaping and

(2) contingency contracting

Shaping - this means a gradual molding of a behavior that is very difficult or nearly impossible. A behavior is molded by taking very small steps and rewarding one's self for each step. This is repeated over and over. As each step is mastered the reward is extended to the next more difficult task. Once the goal is reached, the eward is given only for repeating or maintaining the goal behaviors. In weight control, this technique can be very helpful. For example, a person whose daily caloric intake is 3,000 calories will find it extremely difficult to reduce that intake to 1,000 overnight. However, if this person were to reduce his/her intake by only 100 calories for each day, it would be easier. By the end of 20 days, he would be down to 1,000 calories a day. This 1,000 level would be easier to maintain also because it would have been developed gradually.

Contingency Contracting - This is simply a matter of deciding how to reward yourself for doing the right thing. In other words, set up a plan to earn something you enjoy or want very much by following your weight control plan. The desired reward (object or activity) is given a price. It is earned by paying oneself systematically a specified number of points, tokens or money for every behavior that is being strengthened. When a certain number of tokens equals the price of the reward, the tokens are exchanged for the reward. Follow the steps on Worksheet #2 to set up your own plan.

In summary, before one begins to manage one's own behaviors systematically, it is important to understahd that there are two types of behaviors. Involuntary, which is controlled by events that precede the behavior and Intelligent behavior which is controlled chiefly by the events that follow it. In order to change a specific behavior, one must first analyze it in terms of the Signal events that set the behavior in motion and the events that follow it. These events are called consequences. The next step is to determine if the behavior is to be strengthened or weakened. Behaviors are weakened by extinction, changing the signal events, or cost/punishment techniques. Behaviors can be strengthened in a number of ways. A very effective way is to set up a reward system whereby one determines that a set amount

of points will be earned for performing specific behaviors. When those points earned equal the value of the reward, the reward is obtained.

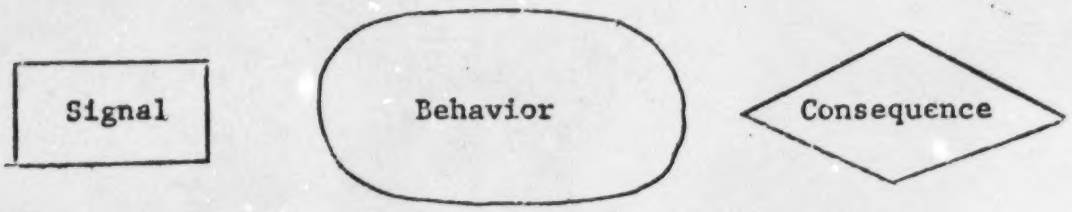
Managing one's own behavior is not easy, particularly when it involves changing lifetime habits. One can learn, however, to make the changes desired by utilizing the principles of behavioral science. The person who can manage his/her own behavior is free to pursue even greater goals that can lead to a more fulfilling life for herself and those important other persons in one's life.

Thank you very much for your attention.

WORKSHEET #1

IDENTIFYING WEIGHT CONTROL BEHAVIORS

Intelligent Behavior Model



Intelligent behaviors are set in motion by some event or sign that serves to signal the person to behave in a certain way at a certain moment. After the behavior occurs a consequence follows. Whether the consequence is pleasant or unpleasant will determine whether or not the behavior will occur again.

Directions: Complete your own model

1. Select a behavior you do that is related to gaining weight. Write it in the oval space.
2. Then write what occurs first just prior to the behavior in the square space.
3. Now write in the diamond space what happens (or how you feel) after you do the behavior.

My Signal Behavior Consequence

Good work! You have taken the first step. Now that you have analyzed a behavior you want to change, you are well on your way to planning for change.

WORKSHEET #2

Weight Control Behavior Change Plan

1. Write the behaviors that will earn points.

   (1) Eating no more than 1,000 calories per day. (Example)

   (2) _____

   (3) _____

   (4) _____

2. Write the rewards for doing the behaviors.

   (1) Jade bracelet (2) _____

   (3) _____ (4) _____

3. Decide how many points are needed for each reward.

	Reward	Cost in Points/Dollars
(1)	Jade bracelet	$100
(2)		
(3)		
(4)		

4. Decide how many points will be paid (earned) for each behavior.

	Behavior	Earns
(1)	1,000 calories each day	$1 point per day
(2)		
(3)		

5. Determine how long (weeks) it will take to earn reward. Write it here:

   (1) 14 weeks, 2 days

   (2) _____

   (3) _____

6. Decide on a recording system.

Example:
Card posted on refrigerator:

Day	Date	Calories	Points	Weeks' Totals
TH	_____	_____	_____	1st _____
Fri	_____	_____	_____	2nd _____
Sat	_____	_____	_____	3rd _____
Sun	_____	_____	_____	4th _____
Mon	_____	_____	_____	5th _____
Tues	_____	_____	_____	6th _____
Wed	_____	_____	_____	7th _____
Week's Total		_____	_____	8th _____
				9th _____
				10th _____

7. Decide if you will "fine" yourself for going over your calories?

Yes_____ No_____

How many points will you take away (fine) for number of calories over _____?

8. Decide if you will give yourself Bonus points? Yes_____ No_____

How many bonus points can be earned? _____

for doing what? _____

CONGRATULATIONS! You have just completed your weight control behavior plan!!

THINK THIN!

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